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Trouble Follows U-2

The U-2, one of the most valuable intelligence tools, is also one of the most controversial. Wherever U-2's go, trouble seems to follow.

The U-2, virtually a sailplane with a powerful jet engine that boosts it to extremely high altitudes, broke most spectacularly into the news in May, 1960, when Francis Gary Powers, in the employ of the Central Intelligence Agency, was shot down in one over the Soviet Union.

Nikita S. Khrushchev, then Soviet Premier, demanded that the United States apologize for such spy flights. He used the incident to break up the scheduled Paris conference of leaders of the United States, Britain, France and his own country.

The U-2 was used to get the first conclusive pictures showing Soviet missiles had been moved into Cuba in 1962. The proof brought on the United States-Soviet showdown that threatened the world with nuclear war. The Soviet Union backed down and removed the missiles.